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Haqq, mufti of Egypt, and Abd al-Aziz Abdullah ibn Baz, mufti of Saudi Arabia. As chief legal authorities in their respective countries, with a large number of fatwas on record, they enjoyed the esteem of vast audiences both within and outside the boundaries of their respective states. The former legalized the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty from a religious viewpoint presenting several arguments such as the religious obligation to respond to an enemy's peace offer, especially if it meets the Muslims' interest, as had been done by the Prophet himself vis-à-vis his pagan enemies (while Jews have a higher status in Muslim eyes). He further explained that the peace treaty had followed earlier agreements made by Arab-Muslim states with Israel, thus emphasizing the latter's being regarded as an established fact.

Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz defended the 1993 Oslo Accords and thereby challenged fatwas issued against them by radical muftis such as the renowned Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Ibn Baz's arguments, expounded in three fatwas, did mention the Prophetic precedence but focused mainly on the right of discretion of each Muslim ruler (in this case PLO chairman Yasser Arafat) to determine whether peace with the enemy is beneficial to his people.

All in all, this book is highly recommended for anyone interested in the issue of peace in the Middle East, as well as for anyone enchanted by the endless twists and turns between religious ideologies and worldly political necessities.

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THE FIRST GLOBAL GRAND MUFTI

Through the Eyes of the Mufti: The Essays of Haj Amin, by Zvi Elpeleg,
translated and annotated by Rachel Kessel, Vallentine Mitchell, 2009,
240 pp.

Reviewed by WOLFGANG G. SCHWANITZ

At times—notes Zvi Elpeleg, editor of al-Hajj Amin al-Husaini's texts as published in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Misri* in 1954, and in three book editions

until 1957—"I even doubted the rationale of translating this collection and dealing with its contents." Some of the arguments it advanced, he acknowledged, were so groundless as hardly to be worth discussing.

Perhaps, Elpeleg explains further in the preface, the book would have been unnecessary if not for three matters: (1) the essays were written by a man who had founded and led the Palestinian national movement for decades; (2) they constitute the primary source material he left behind; and (3) his political doctrine influenced millions in the region based on the premise of a British-Jewish plot to empty Palestine of Arabs, destroy the al-Aqsa Mosque, rebuild Solomon's Temple, and expand the Zionist endeavor to other Arab lands.

Al-Hajj Amin al-Husaini was the Grand Mufti (1921–1948) and Palestinian leader until his death in 1974. Elpeleg is known for his book on al-Husaini's life,¹ and his present book has two parts. The first includes al-Husaini's essays and Elpeleg's responses in endnotes. The second contains Elpeleg's articles on: the al-Aqsa Mosque and Solomon's Temple; the issue of land; the alleged British-Jewish plot; and the Arab invasion and why Palestine was not created in 1948.

Before returning to Elpeleg's three issues above, a brief word about the author. He was military governor of Israel's Triangle region in the mid-1950s; of Gaza in 1956–1957; of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967; of Fayid, Egypt, on the Great Bitter Lake in 1973; and of southern Lebanon in 1982. From 1995 to 1997, Elpeleg was Israeli ambassador to Turkey. Since 1972 he has also been a researcher at the Dayan Center of Tel Aviv University.

Now for the first point, namely, that al-Husaini built the Palestinian national movement. In European terms, however, he did not yet have a nation, nor any idea of individualism and citizenship in the old Roman sense. Thus, this book presents political fatwas offered by al-Husaini in the traditional question-answer style (1954–1957). Elpeleg adds valuable comments. But how did this book come about? As a spy reported from Cairo, al-Husaini prepared this third edition together with the Nazi agitator Johann von Leers, giving it the title *Haqa'iq An Qadiyyat Filastin*² (*The Truth on the Palestine Question*). It was to be published in Germany as well by Karl-Heinz Priester of Wiesbaden,³ a former SS officer. In Cairo in 1957, Priester discussed with Leers how to sway nonaligned states. Leers, for his part, favored establishing an aid society for "nationalist groups imprisoned by court orders or prosecuted for their beliefs,"⁴ a sort of Nazi Amnesty International. Thus, the third edition emerged at the height of Nazi activities in Cairo as typified by al-Husaini and Leers.

There was an American claim that in 1959 Leers became "chief propaganda adviser" to President Abd an-Nasir (Nasser).⁵ Although this is doubtful, Leers's impact was palpable. In October 1958, the Egyptians read *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which Leers had earlier disseminated. As Abd an-Nasir soon told an Indian journalist, the book convinced him that Europe was in the hands of three

hundred Zionists.⁶ He also said the Holocaust was a fiction. His brother Shauqi, who edited the *Protocols* in Arabic, was still tirelessly propagating them in 1981.⁷

An American diagram of Leers's network included Ali Sabri, state minister of presidential affairs; Anwar as-Sadat, president of the Afro-Asian Council; Muhammad Khaliq Hasuna, secretary-general of the Arab League; al-Hajj Amin al-Husaini; Gen. Abd al-Azim Ibrahim Fahmi, director of general investigations of the Interior Ministry in Egypt and Syria; and Sayyid Hafiz Abd al-Karim, secretary-general of the Economy Ministry. The Arab League paid Umar Amin von Leers well, to the tune of eighty to a hundred Egyptian pounds monthly.⁸

Al-Husaini and Leers added documents to the book. The former, for his part, had been under a decade of pressure. In 1946 U.S. secretary of state Dean Acheson announced publication of a White Paper on al-Husaini's files. Out of concern for Muslim feelings, however, it never appeared. A few days later al-Husaini claimed that his American-captured records included forgeries by the Zionists.

In the ensuing year Simon Wiesenthal edited a booklet in German, and the Nation Associates a documentary in English and French, dealing with the Grand Mufti. Both stressed the genocidal cooperation between Adolf Eichmann and Amin al-Husaini, this "duo of death," in Nazi Germany, and in the Balkans in Europe, in Soviet Asia, and in the Middle East.⁹ Subsequently the Palestinian wanted to publish some files aimed at disproving his "alleged pro-Axis steps as claimed by the Jews."¹⁰ However, his "records of innocence" never appeared.

On July 16, 1948, al-Husaini published a report on his Higher Arab Organization suddenly stressing its social activities.¹¹ Only the third edition of *The Truth on the Palestine Question* carried some documents. Elpeleg removed most of them, such as the Writ of Mandate and the Balfour Declaration. Unfortunately, he omitted some Qur'an verses from his edition *Through the Eyes of the Mufti*, claiming they had no actual relevance to the contents. On the contrary, for Middle East historians and the general public those verses as added and edited by al-Husaini were and remain relevant. Otherwise the Grand Mufti would not have included them. So editing them out represents a regrettable loss, especially for those who are researching the roots of the currently triumphant national and global Islamism which emerged after the revolts of 2011.

A comparison of al-Husaini's collection in the third edition of 1957 with his final memoirs published four decades later reveals many similarities. The 1999 book, however, includes much more documents. Elpeleg's book, then, which is especially well versed in the relevant Hebrew literature, is an additional tool for the academic community. In a further edition some misspelled names can easily be corrected such as Khalid al-Qarqani, Musa Kazim al-Husaini, Shakib Arslan, al-Hajj Amin al-Husaini, or Fauzi al-Qawuqji, to mention just a few. But "nakbat Filastin"—that is, the Palestinian debacle, or loss of land and of the war in 1948–1949—should never be translated as "Palestinian Holocaust." Unfor-

tunately translator Rachel Kessel, who otherwise did good work, and the editor used this term all over the book (xvi, 16, 23, 125, 128, 145, 209). There is no real equivalence between the two events, the more so as this “nakba” was rooted in al-Husaini’s deeply flawed political doctrine as the reader can discover in this book. As is explained here, al-Husaini was the architect of the nakba and acted as an accomplice of the Holocaust.¹²

As for Elpeleg’s second point mentioned at the beginning (2), we cannot regard this book as the “primary source material” left by al-Husaini or as his “memoirs.” He was industrious, issuing thousands of pages of sermons, speeches, radio addresses, letters, leaflets, and memoranda. He edited booklets on the al-Aqsa Mosque¹³ in 1929 and on Islam and Jewry in 1937.¹⁴ A Nazi biography of 1943 reflects his influence on Muslims and Islamists.¹⁵

The 1957 collection, then, is just a minor part of a bigger picture. Al-Husaini’s early memoirs appeared partially in the journal *Filastin* in 1970; his final memoirs, as mentioned, in 1999.¹⁶ Why Elpeleg did not use this material, as well as the more recent literature, is unclear. Still more major findings on al-Husaini are expected, including his roles as activist of a “Jew-free Middle East,” accomplice of the Holocaust, aide of Adolf Eichmann including after 1945, plotter of the murder of Lebanon’s ex-premier Riyad al-Sulh and of Jordan’s King Abdullah in 1951, and in secretly agreeing to King Husain’s annexation of the West Bank so as to enable al-Husaini to rule Gaza himself, a move that Cairo blocked in 1964.

As for the third point (3) concerning al-Husaini’s political doctrine, in part two of his book Elpeleg presents its key components. He concludes that the Palestinians were a parochial society divided by tribal allegiances, only in the initial stages of developing nationhood both politically and economically (176). He notes that the British high commissioner Herbert Samuel bestowed on al-Husaini the title of Grand Mufti shortly after May 8, 1921 (181), empowering him against Istanbul. This is not correct, though, for his half-brother, who passed away, already had the title Grand Mufti and this function. However, in keeping this order Samuel empowered him, departing from the vanishing traditional rules of Ottoman Istanbul in managing the local and regional hierarchies of muftis and grand muftis. The author, however, often calls him just “the Mufti,” which is clearly wrong. In a not so well-researched book on “Hitler’s Muslims,” the author Volker Koop made the same mistake. He even tried to convince the reader that the Nazis got it wrong in calling al-Husaini a Grand Mufti.¹⁷

In the most interesting essay, asking why an independent Palestine did not emerge in 1948, Elpeleg suggests that the Grand Mufti and the Arab states were responsible for most of the failed efforts. He observes that al-Husaini was an extremist and a fanatic by nature, qualities that prevented him from being more flexible when it might have helped the Palestinian cause. Indeed, his nemesis King Abdul-

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lah had means at his disposal to prevent al-Husaini and his aides from sufficiently activating the existing institutions. On December 20, 1948, the Transjordanian ruler made Sheikh Husam ad-Din Jarallah the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Elpeleg opines that it was also Arabs in neighboring states who prevented the launching of an independent Palestinian state.

All in all, this book is a treasure trove of information on the first global Grand Mufti and the spread of his political ideology, now called national and global Islamism, which he made quite compatible with Hitler's National Socialism.

NOTES

1. Zvi Elpeleg, *Hamufti Hagadol* (Tel Aviv: Misrad Habitachon, 1989) (Hebrew); Zvi Elpeleg, *Al-Mufti al-Akbar* (Akka: Muassasat al-Aswar, 1991) (Arabic); Zvi Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti: Haj Amin al-Hussaini, Founder of the Palestinian National Movement* (London: Frank Cass, 1992); Zvi Elpeleg, *Filistin Ulusal Hareketinin kurucusu: Haci Emin el-Hüseyni* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınlan, 1999) (Turkish).
2. Muhammad Amin al-Husaini, *Haqā'iq An Qadiyyat Filastin: Tasrihat wa Ahadith Li-s-Sayyid Muhammad Amin al-Husaini kashafa biha as-Sitar an Asbab Karithat Filastin wa Alaqatiha bi-l-Mu'amarat ad-Duwalayya al-Yahudiyya* (The Truth on the Palestine Question: Announcements and Interviews by Saiyyid Muhammad Amin al-Husaini in Which He Unveiled the Reasons for the Palestinian Catastrophe and Their Relations to the Global Plots of Jewry), 3rd ed. (Cairo, 1957) (Arabic).
3. The planned German title was *The World Fight against Imperialism and Colonialism*.
4. USArchII, RG263, Leers Visit by Priestster 09/30/57, Cairo 10/25/1957; Leers, Priestster Article for states of Bandung Conference, National Aid Society, 01/30/58; book by Priestster, Kirkut, and al-Husaini, 12/04/1958, 1.
5. Ibid., Leers Chief Advisor to Abd an-Nasir, 02/02/59, 1.
6. "Nasser und die 'Weisen von Zion,'" *Der Tagesspiegel* (Berlin), October 31, 1958 (German).
7. Shauqi Abd an-Nasir, *Thaurat Abd an-Nasir* (Nicosia: Al-Arabi, 1981) (Arabic).
8. USArchII, RG263, Leers, Social Web, 02/02/1959, 2.
9. Simon Wiesenthal, *Großmufti, Großagent der Achse* (Salzburg: Ried, 1947) (German); the Nation Associates, eds., "The Arab Higher Committee, Its Origins, Personnel and Purposes: The Documentary Record Submitted to the United Nations," New York, May 1947.
10. USArchII, RG263, Al-Husaini to publish files refuting accusations on his alleged pro-Axis activities as spread by the Jews, 06/09/47.
11. "Report on the Activities of the Arab Higher Organization [not to be confused with the old Arab Higher Committee] on the Occasion of the Second Anniversary of Its Formation, June 1946–1948," Cairo, July 16, 1948 (Arabic, English).
12. Gilbert Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust* (New York: Picador, 2010), 130.
13. Supreme Muslim Council, ed., "A Brief Guide to Al-Haram Ash-Sharif," Muslim Orphanage Press, Jerusalem, 1929.
14. Muhammad Sabri, *Islam-Judentum-Bolschewismus* (Berlin: Juncker-Dünnhaupt, 1938), therein Amin al-Husaini, "Islam-Judentum," and "Aufruf des Großmuftis an die islamische Welt" (1937 appeal of the Grand Mufti to all Muslims to free Islamic areas of Jews) (German).

15. Kurt Fischer-Werth, *Amin al-Husaini, Grossmufti von Palästina* (Berlin: Titz, 1943) (German).
16. Amin al-Husaini, *Muzakkirat al-Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husaini* (The Memoirs of al-Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husaini), ed. Abd al-Karim al-Umar (Damascus: Al-Ahali, 1999) (Arabic).
17. Volker Koop, *Hitlers Muslime. Die Geschichte einer unheiligen Allianz* (Berlin: Be.Bra, 2012), 201 (German).

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FROM MODERN HATRED TO BIBLICAL PROPHECY

Israël peut-il survivre? La nouvelle règle du jeu (Can Israel Survive? The New Rules of the Game), by Michel Gurfinkiel, Editions Hugo & Cie, 2011, 304 pp.

Reviewed by MICHELLE MAZEL

Following the 2008–2009 Cast Lead operation in Gaza, French bookstores were suddenly flooded with books about Israel, most of them accusing and condemning the Jewish state. This prompted Jewish writers, both newcomers and seasoned authors, to pen essays and books defending Israel. They bemoaned the perils threatening the country and hinted at a catastrophic future for it.

Thus, in *A State Too Many*,¹ Fabien Ghez notes that today it is more and more widely believed that, if Israel were to disappear, the world would be a better place and peace would break out. In *Israel: A Future Compromised*, Olivier Burochowitch and Richard Laub openly ask whether the demise of the Jewish state is inevitable.² In *A Name Too Many: Is Israel Illegitimate?*, with a foreword by Pierre Andre Taguieff, Jacques Tarnero wonders why so many people want not only the elimination of Israel but even of its very name.³ Taguieff himself recently published *Israel and the New Jewish Issue*.⁴ These and other books highlight the miracle of Israel's renewal and accomplishments as well as the mendacious and virulent campaign against its very existence.

Even in this context, a new book by Michel Gurfinkiel, his seventh, is of special